



Contributed photo

Dylan Beaver of Kings Mountain advances the ball downfield against the Crest Chargers in SMAC soccer game last week at John Gamble Stadium.

Kicking Mountaineers make playoff move with victory over R-S Central

Kings Mountain defeated R-S Central 4-2 in a big SMAC soccer game Monday night at John Gamble Stadium.

Lee Bridges started the scoring for the Mountaineers just five minutes into the match. Bryan Lysek had the assist.

The Hilltoppers tied the score with a break away with just three minutes remaining in the first half.

RS grabbed a 2-1 lead 2:30 into the second half. But the Mountaineers, with a

never say die attitude, fought hard to get the equalizer at the 16-minute mark of the half. Arrick Rithiphong scored off a direct kick from 25 yards out that hit the upper ninety just off the far post.

The Mountaineer defense withstood a strong offensive attack from RS but each time they were frustrated by KM keeper Jarrett Ledford.

"I couldn't be any prouder of our defensive effort from Jack Zyble, Tyler Batchler, Cameron Hord and Jordan

Sweezy," said KM coach Dan Potter. "I told the players that this is a playoff team and we are capable of taking it to them, and in the words of coach Ted Trahan, 'Believe!' They did and then proceeded to score three unanswered goals in the second half for the victory."

Brian Lysek scored just two minutes after the previous goal off a super cross from his brother, Robbie Lysek.

"The Lysek brothers have really stated to gel together

as the season has gone on," Potter said.

Rithiphong added his second goal and insured the victory at the 70-second mark. Isaiah Cole set Rithiphong up for a break away that he clammy slotted to the lower right side of the goal.

The victory was the seventh of the season for the Mountaineers, who will host Cherryville in a non-conference game Thursday at 6 p.m.

MOUNTAINEERS: lose to Draughn

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"Josh Bell did an outstanding job on defense and Tico Crocker played every snap on offense, defense and special teams."

Crocker led the Mountaineers in rushing with 11 carries for 89 yards and a touchdown.

Except for their two touchdown drives, the Mountaineers couldn't get their offense going against Draughn's big linemen and linebackers. Kings Mountain was held to three and out on five of its nine possessions.

After holding the Mountaineers to three and out on their first two possessions, the Wildcats drove 90 yards to take a 7-0 lead on a 10-yard touchdown run by Gavin Morton. The drive consumed 19 plays and most of the first half clock.

The Mountaineers had their best drive after Keeneh Dimetros returned Draughn's ensuing kickoff to the 30 yard line. With Crocker moving from running back to quarterback, KM marched 70 yards in eight plays with Crocker scoring from nine yards out. Cameron Hord's PAT from placement tied the game at



RaeQuan Allen (25) runs hard against Draughn defense Friday night in Valdese.

7-all.

Draughn answered and took the lead for good on a 12 yard touchdown run by Morton with 1:34 left in the half.

Kings Mountain had the ball for only 18 plays in the first half, while its defense was pounded by the big Draughn line for 34 plays.

"We wore down a little bit," noted Coach Lloyd. "We couldn't get their offense off the field and it snowballed in the second half."

Draughn scored on four of its first five possessions in the second half to stretch its lead to 39-7. Kings Moun-

tain finally got on the board for its second TD when Jordan Ford broke a 33-yard touchdown run with 2:18 left in the game.

The positive thing for the Mountaineers in their current losing streak is that a lot of reserves and JV players are getting some valuable varsity experience.

"We brought some more up (from the JV team) for this game and they got some playing time," Lloyd noted. "We're hoping we'll get everybody back this week except (Brandon) Bell, who should be back next week" when the Mountaineers travel to R-S Central.

CREST: at KM Friday

From Page 1B

at full strength again this week and untested young players will have to take up the slack of not having starter Brandon Bell at quarterback.

Coach Greg Lloyd hopes freshmen running back Darian McClain and wide receiver Jake Merchant will be back in the lineup but several other starters are still question marks. Chance Frederick and Dre Bell, who have been out since the Forestview game a month ago, are questionable along with defensive starters Alex Reynolds and Julian Coulter, who were injured last week at Draughn.

Brandon Bell hurt his throwing shoulder in the fourth game of the season against East Rutherford but played in pain - and took some heavy hits - in losses to Burns and Shelby. He should return to action next week at R-S Central.

Last year's leading receiver, Xavier Johnson, has missed the entire season after hurting his foot in the Cleveland County Jamboree.

He and Frederick were supposed to go to their doctors yesterday and Coach Lloyd hopes they will be cleared to play.

"We're hoping they will be released, but they would not be able to play this week," Lloyd said. "They would have to go through the required number of practice days."

The Mountaineers have missed Johnson tremendously. The junior standout caught 55 passes for 871 yards last year. His return would make it harder for opposing defenses to double-team this year's 1-2 receiving combo of Tico Crocker and Jake Merchant.

"It sure would be nice to have him back for the last three games," Lloyd said. "We would be a different ball team."

But, this week, the Mountaineers must find a way to move the ball against a very big and strong Crest defense; and the Mountaineer defense will have to contain some of the quickest backs the Mountaineers will see.

"They're the normal

Crest team," Lloyd noted. "They are run-oriented and have three guys in the backfield that can run the ball."

The Chargers' top running threat is returning All-Conference star Jalin Moore, who is a breakaway threat from anywhere on the field and averages almost 10 yards per carry. Sophomore running back Tre Harbinson is making his mark as well, and junior quarterback P.J. Brooks returns for his third year as starter.

"They have outstanding speed and good size," Lloyd said of the Chargers' backfield.

Their lines are big and experienced as well, and their kicker, junior Alex Trejo, usually puts his kick-offs in the end zone and has a school record 53-yard field goal to his credit.

"They're an all-around good team," said Lloyd. "We will have to play very well and tackle very well and be much improved to be competitive. Our goal this week is to get a good overall effort and have a chance to win."



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